REMARKS

The Examiner rejects claims 1, 2, 10, 11, 16, and 17 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over Daley '431 in view of Jenkins '243.

Claim 1 clearly distinguishes for the following reasons. First with respect to Daley, claim 1 recites activating the main slot and separator punches and deactivating the part feature punch. In Daley there is no deactivation of the part feature punch. Claim 1 further recites deactivating the main slot punch and separator punch and activating the part feature punch. Daley never deactivates the main slot punch and separator punch. Also Daley in the words of claim 1 does not feed the strip into the die a second step distance different then the first step distance. Also Daley does not deactivate the part feature punch and reactivate the slot punch and feed the strip where the third step distance is equal to a difference between the first and second step distances. There are thus multiple recitations in claim 1 distinguishing over Daley.

The Examiner cites Jenkins to satisfy the multiple missing features in Daley. Jenkins shows in Fig. 1 a progressive die having five stages. In stage 1, slots A or B are alternately punched along with slot C. A and B define the ends of the lamination. The alternating activation for slots A or B occurs by use of a cam bar 22 shown in Fig. 2 so that either punch 20A or 20B is activated alternately.

In stage 2, the through-holes 27 at the edges of the strip alternate with the through-hole 27 at the middle of the strip. This is also done with a common cam bar such as 22 shown in Fig. 2.

Significantly, in Jenkins there is no changing of the step distance during progression. The step progression remains constant throughout all five stages.

Claim 1 distinguishes over Daley combined with Jenkins since the combination would not suggest activating the main slot and separator punches and deactivating the part feature punch. In Jenkins the round hole part feature punches 27 are alternated, but never deactivated. One of the part feature punches 27 – either the part feature punches along the edge of the strip or the part feature punch in the middle of the strip - is always activated.

Next, claim 1 distinguishes over the combination by reciting deactivating the main slot punch and the separator punch and activating the part feature punch. In Daley the main slot punch and separator punch are never deactivated. In Jenkins the punch is used to create the E-shape laminations are not deactivated. The punches for windows 25, edge cuts 29, lamination punch 10, and end of leg slot punches 18a/18b are not deactivated. Although 18a and 18b are alternated, they are never both deactivated since one of them is always punching.

Claim 1 next distinguishes by reciting feeding the strip into the die with a second step distance different than said first step distance when the main slot punch and the separator punch are deactivated and the part feature punch is activated. Daley never changes step distance. Jenkins never changes step distance. There is thus no second step distance in either Daley or Jenkins.

Claim 1 further distinguishes by reciting deactivating the part feature punch and reactivating the slot punch and the separator punch and feeding the strip into the die with a third step distance equal to a difference between the first and second step distances. Not only do neither Jenkins or Daley deactivate the part feature punch (there is always a part feature punch activated in Jenkins) but also neither Daley or Jenkins have this third step distance. Both Daley and Jenkins have a constant step progression with no change in step distance.

In conclusion, there is not just one, but many ways in which the language of claim 1 distinguishes over the combination of Jenkins and Daley. Claim 1 is allowable over the cited references.

Dependent claims 2-15 distinguish at least for the reasons independent method claim 1 distinguishes.

Independent method claim 16 distinguishes at least by reciting that when a part feature is to be punched, deactivating the slot punch, activating the part feature punch, and feeding the strip with a new step distance which is different than the slot step distance. In Daley the slot punch is never deactivated. In Jenkins the slot punch is never deactivated. In both Daley and Jenkins the strip feed is constant and there is never a new step distance different than the slot step distance when punching the part feature.

Independent claim 17 distinguishes at least by reciting that when a part feature is to be punched, deactivating the slot punch, activating the part feature punch, and feeding the strip with a new step distance which is different than the slot step distance. In both Daley and Jenkins a slot punch is never deactivated. In Jenkins at least one of the A or B punches for ends of the laminations is always present. Moreover, in both Jenkins and Daley, there is no feeding of the strip with a new step distance different than the slot step distance. Both Jenkins and Daley maintain the same stepping distance during progression of the strip through stages 1 through 5. Also claim 17 distinguishes by reciting creating a pattern of slots and part features wherein progression of the part feature step distances is not evenly divisible by a progression of the slot step distances. The step distances in both Jenkins and Daley remain the same throughout stages 1 through 5.

Independent claim 18 distinguishes at least by reciting a servo motor for feeding the strip wherein a step distance can be changed depending on whether the slot punch and separator punch are being activated, or whether the part feature punch is being activated, so that a step distance for the slot punch is different than a step distance for the slot punch is different than a step distance for the part feature punch. In both Daley and Jenkins there is no such servo motor and also there is no step distance for a slot punch which is different than a step distance for the part feature punch. In Jenkins and Daley the step distance remains the same. In Jenkins through stages 1 through 5 there is no change in step distance.

Allowance of the case is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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